



# AMIAA NEWS

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*The New Church in Vanatzor*

## The Armenian Evangelical Church is 158 Years Old

Peter Doghramji

On July 1, 2004, the Armenian Evangelical Church will be 158 years old. In a recent letter to Church Unions and related institutions, the Rev. Dr. Vahan Tootikian reminds us of the decision of the Armenian Evangelical World Council inviting Churches to observe the first Sunday in July as "Armenian Evangelical Church Sunday", and designate the offering of that day to the World Council. This is a timely reminder not only to the Church but also to its Mission. Therefore, we rejoice and give thanks to God for calling us to be a Church, in the cradle of our Mother Church, and for empowering us to survive the Genocide and establish Churches in the Middle East, the Americas, Europe, Australia, and even in our free and independent Armenia.

It was 75 years after the founding of the Armenian Evangelical Church in Istanbul, by 37 men and 3 women, that the Armenian Missionary Association of America was formed by a few visionaries, meeting in an upstairs crowded little office in the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York. They rightly thought that the Church should be "armed" and well equipped for mission. That is why the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) became "the arm of the Armenian Evangelical Church".

One wonders what happened between 1846 and 1921 A.D.! Was the Church without a mission? Of course not. The Near East Mission of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions was active among the Armenians in Anatolia. They sent missionaries who helped the infant Church. They were the experts, the brains, and the administrators. They also had the money, and carried American (and British or German) passports. They were dedicated, zealous, and committed to their mission.

Some of them even gave their lives during the Genocide. The Church grew by leaps and bounds. Churches, schools, colleges, seminaries and hospitals were established.

Then the roof collapsed in 1914. The Unions and Churches ceased to exist. The remnant sought refuge in the Middle East, Europe and America. But the Church did not die – it only spread wider, and gradually established itself into congregations and Unions of Churches.

What happened to Mission? Gone were the missionaries. But by the grace of God, in came the valiant men and women of God who continued the ministry and mission which began in the Old World. They were never called "missionaries"; that term was reserved to those who were sent from America and Europe. Nevertheless, they were the real missionaries who preached the Word to the poor, evangelized the desperate and the hopeless, fed the hungry, clothed the naked, educated the young, reestablished institutions of service, and administered the entire mission of the Church. They were the pastors and the lay persons who were truly the missionaries, acting out not only as the arm of the Church, but also its legs, eyes, ears and fingers.

We salute our "missionaries" throughout our history, as we observe the birth of the Armenian Evangelical Church in 1846. We also give thanks to God for those who continue to do the mission of the Church all over the world. Recently, I counted 70 ordained ministers in the AEUNA Directory, with 3 licentiates and 8 (widowed) *yeretzgins*. In the AMAA Directory, I counted 122 ordained ministers and 12 licentiates in the world. They are all missionaries, gifted persons, called by God and sent in the name of Christ, "to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Eph.4:12)".

We who are called to be the "mission arm of the Church", salute our dedicated missionaries, and renew our commitment to equip them for evangelism, discipleship, philanthropy, relief and rehabilitation, to the glory of God.

Happy Anniversary! G



### AMAA NEWS

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#### COVER PICTURE

Evangelical Church of Armenian in Vanatzor



## A Visit to Armenia

**Peter Doghramji**

Armenia is more than a piece of real estate; it is people. That is why our recent trip (May 25-June 3) was more than a tour. It was a visit. Mr. Dikran Youmshakian, our Administrative Director, and Mr. Al DePaola, our Auditor, joined me in visiting our colleagues, co-workers, staff persons, seminarians, pastors, and friends. Our visit was enriched by representatives of the three Armenian Evangelical Unions and our World Council. Together we worshiped in Yerevan, Vanatzor and Stepanavan, visited President Kocharian, planted a commemorative tree at Dzidzernakapert Genocide Memorial, participated in the Celebration of May 28 Armenian Independence Day in Sardarabad, enjoyed concerts given by two musical groups, Shoghig and Yerk Yerkotz, dedicated the Armenian Evangelical Church of Vanatzor, and ordained its Pastor, the Rev. Samvel Kirakossian, and the pastor of the Stepanavan Church, the Rev. Ara Ochianian.

Our hosts, led by the Rev. Rene Leonian, were very gracious and accommodating. Within the revised administrative structure, Rene is assisted by a staff composed of an



*Memorial Service at Dzidzernagapert, with the participation of the students (above). Planting of a tree in Dzidzernagapert, in memory of the 1.5 million Armenian martyrs.*

### BIBLE STUDY SERIES

#### BIBLICAL PROFILES OF MISSIONARIES AND THEIR MISSION

#### III. Jonah: The Run-Away Prophet

The Book of Jonah

**Peter Doghramji**

Prophets are a strange breed. They have no theological training, or ecclesiastical accreditation. They appear from nowhere. They claim to be the mouthpiece of god. They receive no compensation. They live on charity. They are rarely loved, but often feared, and therefore persecuted and even killed. They are sharp-tongued, assertive, and sure of their message when they declare: "Thus says the Lord!"

Jonah was a practicing prophet. God asked him to deliver a message to the Ninevites, enemies of Israel. It was a message of doom & destruction, with no ifs, ands, or buts. Jonah thought about it, but was reluctant to deliver that message in person. He ran away, was caught by a fish, and brought back and sent to Ninevah.

Jonah became a reluctant missionary. He loved the Word of God, the Good News to his people. But he had difficulty sharing it, even in its judgmental form, with his hated enemies.

We have many Jonahs among us today, who know the bible, who are sure of the Gospel, who preach the Word as long as they stay where they are and their listeners come to them. Jonah, the run-away prophet became a missionary, albeit reluctantly. The cure for many self-proclaimed prophets today is to move from their comfortable environment and reach out to *odars* and other children of God.G

administrator (Miss Anna Yengibarian), a Christian Education Director (Mr. Harout Nercessian), a Director of Publicity and Publication (Mr. Antranik Mardoyan), a controller (interviewed, to be employed shortly), and a Construction Manager (interviewed, and temporarily employed).

St. Luke, the author of Acts, describes the growth of the church in terms of "The Word." At the conclusion of each circle of geographical expansion, Jerusalem, Samaria, Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Rome, he writes, "The Word of God grew..." We witness the same in Armenia. The Word of God continues to grow in cities, towns and villages, as children and adults, men and women, hear and receive the Word, the Good News of Christ, with great joy and enthusiasm. They "sing" the Word, live by it, and witness it in more than 50 churches and centers of the Evangelical Church of Armenia, supported by the AMAA. They receive the Word not only by hearing it, but by the acts of love which many loving hearts in America, Europe and elsewhere enable and empower the AMAA to perform. These acts of love include food, infant formulas, sneakers, toothpaste & brushes, dental and health care, medicines, and a host of programs and activities such as kindergarten and elementary education, sponsorship of needy children and families, summer camps and DVBS, sports clubs, fine arts (music, painting, woodcarving, ceramics, needlework, weaving), computer training, instruction in languages, together with Sunday Schools and Youth organizations. Such acts of love also include training of leaders in the Theological Academy.

We at the AMAA are privileged to share  
(*cont'd on the following page*)



*The Ordination Service at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanavan.*



*The Ordination Service at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vanatzor and the dedication of the new sanctuary.*



*Ordination of Rev. Samvel Kirakossian, pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Vanatzor.*



*The Ordination of Rev. Ara Ochianian, pastor of the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Stepanavan.*



# Meeting with The Council of the Evangelical Churches of Armenia

Dikran Youmshakian

The re-establishment of the Evangelical Church of Armenia goes back to the year 1991 when AMAA-supported Christian Education Ministries were gradually expanded developing Bible study groups, prayer meetings and regular worship services. In July of 1994, the Evangelical Church of Armenia was officially recognized by the authorities of the Republic of Armenia.

Today there are over 50 active Evangelical Churches and Fellowships in different areas of Armenia. These churches and fellowships are organized as a Union, led by a Council composed of representatives from each church or fellowship.

During his recent visit to Armenia, AMAA Executive Director, Rev. Peter Doghramji, had a meeting with the Council of the Evangelical Churches of Armenia on Wednesday, June 2 at the Evangelical Theological Academy of Armenia. Thirty people were present at the meeting including guest ministers from overseas who had come to participate in week long activities of ordinations, church sanctuary dedication and the planting of a tree at the Dzidzernagapert Memorial in remembrance of the victims of the Armenian Genocide.

The main emphasis of the meeting with



the Council was to encourage the leadership to take on greater responsibility and a much more active role in the affairs of the local Evangelical Churches and affiliated institutions – Academy, School, Christian Education Programs, etc.

Dr. Doghramji, in his remarks at the meeting, thanked God for the leadership of young Christian workers who had responded to the Great Commission and had dedicated their lives and services to the Lord and the people in the homeland. He encouraged the Council to keep in touch with Sister Unions and

learn from their experience. He emphasized the help that the Union of Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East can provide to strengthen the foundation of the Union in Armenia.

Many other current issues were discussed and the atmosphere during the meeting was very cordial. There was much to be shared but the time was short. Taking part in the discussions were also the representatives of the Armenian Evangelical World Council, Reverends Vahan Tootikian and Megerdich Karagoezian. G

*(cont'd from the previous page)*

your acts of love with your sisters and brothers in Armenia and elsewhere, wherever there is need. We are also authorized to challenge you to grow in sharing your love. The needs are overwhelming. As the Word grows, we feel more and more inadequate to the task. We need more sponsorships for children at \$250 (currently \$240) per child. We need sponsors for major building and renovation projects. We have the land in Gumri - a donation from the Mayor. We need at least \$25,000 to start the project. The camp in Hankavan needs massive help. Thousands of children will benefit from this facility when it is renovated.

Our visits will continue and we shall continue to share with you the growth of "the Word" in Armenia. G



*Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji during the Sunday Morning Worship Service at the Evangelical Church of Armenia in Yerevan.*

## Sold Out Crowd Honors Elizabeth Agabian At AMAA Orphan & Child Care Luncheon

The Crystal Ballroom of the Beverly Hills Hotel was the beautiful setting of the AMAA Orphan & Child Care luncheon in honor of Elizabeth Agabian. Over 400 were in attendance and over \$150,000 was raised through donations and sponsorships. Luncheon co-chairs, Dr. Lisa Karamardian and Michele Shirikian welcomed the crowd and announced this year's theme as "A Decade of Commitment and Service". They told a story about a boy on the beach, throwing starfish back into the ocean to save their lives one at a time. Helping the orphans of Armenia is like saving one starfish at a time. Esteemed advisor of the committee, Mrs. Joyce Stein, praised the work of Elizabeth Agabian and offered the prayer thanking God for the generous support received for this most worthy cause, the caring for Armenia's children and orphans.

During lunch, a touching video was shown describing the work of the committee that helps orphanages, schools, orphan children living with relatives, and handicapped children in Armenia. The AMAA Orphan & Child Care Committee also supports Christmas parties and summer camps for thousands of deprived children annually.

The tribute to Elizabeth Agabian was given by her two good friends who have been on the committee since its inception in 1989. Savey Tufenkian spoke in English and talked about the many attributes of Elizabeth and the myriad travels to Armenia on behalf of orphan children. She described Elizabeth as a leader who puts her heart and soul into each project and sees it to fruition. Hermine Janoyan, another good friend and committee member, spoke in Armenian and praised Elizabeth for her charitable endeavors and her dedication to Armenia's children. Mrs. Agabian's son, Michael Agabian spoke about the personal impact of having parents whose life is so connected to Armenia. Elizabeth Agabian then took the podium and recognized the first six members of the original committee and praised the work of the current committee that has grown to 22 hard working ladies. She recognized Mrs. Joyce Stein for her many years



*Children participating in the Fashion Show.*

of inspired leadership of the Committee and then challenged the audience to continue to support the children of Armenia by donating \$250 to become sponsors. She then thanked all her friends and associated groups who were present for their support and affection. She acknowledged the presence in the audience of Mrs. Peter (Kim) Tomsen who had arrived from Washington for this occasion and Mrs. Marineh Guirakossian, wife of the Consul General of Armenia. She stressed that the goal and work of the committee is the primary reason for involvement. The luncheon co-chairs presented Elizabeth with a starfish pin and a starfish Lalique paper weight.

After a delicious dessert, the children's fashion show coordinated by Diane Cabraloff and Gina Felikian was presented. Twenty-eight children in various ensembles walked down the ramp with great big smiles on their faces as their parents and grandparents looked on with great pride. With the closing of the unique and beautiful silent auction organized by Gayane Tatoulian and Christina Jabarian, the luncheon was concluded.

The current Co-chairs of the California area AMAA Orphan & Child Care Commit-



*Elizabeth Agabian flanked by the co-chairs of the Luncheon, Dr. Lisa Karamardian and Michele Shirikian.*

tee, Linda Kay Abdulian and Arsine Phillips thanked all the ladies of the committee who had worked so diligently for so many months on this much deserved tribute to Elizabeth Agabian, the very first chair of the AMAA Orphan & Child Care Committee of the West Coast.G



# Elizabeth Agbabian's Message and Words of Thanks

## Elizabeth Agbabian

**O**n this special day I am honored to have so many of my friends and colleagues present here, especially for the cause that we all support, the caring of orphans and destitute children in Armenia.

I would like to thank the Orphan Care Committee of the Armenian Missionary Association of America who has sponsored this occasion to honor me. Volunteers and humanitarians do not help people for the medals and decorations, and certainly not for financial gains. Our greatest reward is knowing that our efforts have helped the needy and neglected children of Armenia.

For fifteen years volunteers have been able to raise funds to help the children orphaned by the earthquake of 1988 and the Karabagh war. I want to thank the co-chairs of this luncheon today, Michele Shirikian and Dr. Lisa Karamardian along with their committee members who have worked diligently throughout many months to make this wonderful event with its theme "A Decade of Service and Caring" a success. I thank Joyce Stein, the Chair of the Orphan Care Committee for her leadership and the co-chairs Linda Kay Abdulian and Arsineh Phillips as well as the committee of 22 young ladies whose names appear in the program.

A committee of six members was organized after the earthquake by the AMAA to help the children in Armenia and Karabagh. All of the original Committee members are here today. They are Joyce Abdulian, Hermine Janoyan, Grace Kurkjian, Mary Najarian and Savey Tufenkian and myself. We plunged ourselves into this benevolent project, and we were able to raise the community awareness here in California. We coordinated our efforts with the Midwest, whose representative, Juliette Vartanian Abdulian is here with us, and the East Coast, chaired by Michele Simourian of Boston and M J Hekemian of New Jersey. We all joined hands and sent humanitarian help through the United Armenian Fund.

Today we have eleven thousand children in Armenia and Karabagh who benefit from our program. The Orphan Care Committee provides them with food, clothing, shelter,



*Elizabeth Agbabian visiting with orphans in Armenia.*

assists children in orphanages, provides camp experience in the summer, and holiday parties. Today we also have 2600 children who benefit from our Child Sponsorship Program. \$250 a year will sponsor one needy child, and we want to challenge you today to raise this number to 3000.

During one of my recent visits to Yerevan, I visited a family of thirteen persons who live in one tiny room. The family consists of a grandmother, mother and father, a daughter and her husband and eight children including a baby. This was in a poor section of town. The grandmother was very grateful for the sponsorship of one of the children by AMAA. This contribution was spread to the other children by buying the daily needs like bread, sugar, oil, and rice. The milk, which was provided by AMAA, was only for the young children. She had saved some milk to offer me during my visit. This was all she had to show her Armenian hospitality. I knew then that Armenians would survive when the poorest of the poor is more solicitous of others than herself.

Reaching out to those who cannot help themselves is the responsibility of each privileged person in society.

I want to share this honor with my husband and my very best friend, Mihran, who has been a great support to me. He could not be here today. My family members who are here today, especially Michael, who has traveled with me to Armenia twice to tape videos of the children which you saw earlier. Grace, my sister, who has assisted me

from day one and advised me in many different ways. I also want to share this honor with my fellow members of the Orphan Care Committee with whom I have had the privilege of working.

I acknowledge the presence here of my friends with whom I have worked in other organizations serving our people: the Armenian Assembly, the Haigazian College Auxiliary, the Development Services for Armenia, the Armenian International Women's Association, the Evangelical Social Service Center, and the Merdian School Women's Auxiliary, as well as my friends of the United Armenian Congregational Church.

I am grateful to God for giving me this opportunity to serve my people through AMAA. It was Armenia who called me to give to orphans and destitute children the gift of love, compassion, and Christian service that I have received from my family and friends in my childhood and adult life.

When Fred Rogers of the popular children's TV show, Mr. Roger's Neighborhood, received a star on the walk of fame in Hollywood, he did not speak about his career in public television, but he said the following: "the important things are the small acts that make our world a better place". Today let us renew our commitment to perform our small acts for the children of Armenia. Our reward will be to see a new generation of Armenians who will come out of despair to a life of happiness.

Thank you my friends for this honor. G

## The HaiArt Ensemble Performs in AMAA Benefit Recital

Ani Janbazian

The Armenia Summer Camp Committee of the Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) presented a Chamber Music Recital featuring The HaiArt Ensemble on May 2, 2004 at the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York to benefit the children of Armenia and Karabagh. The ensemble consists of five Armenian students of The Juilliard School: violinists Sami Merdinian and Christos Galileas, violist Alexander Nazaryan, cellist Lilit Kurdiyan, and pianist David Alaverdian.

Peter Kougasian, Esq., Vice-President of AMAA, welcomed the audience on behalf of the Armenian Evangelical Church of New York and the AMAA. He gave a brief introduction about AMAA's mission in 22 countries. Mr. Kougasian indicated that each summer the AMAA reaches out to more than 10,000 children and provides them physical and spiritual nourishment through the summer camp programs and Daily Vacation Bible Schools in Armenia, Karabagh and Georgia.

The program began after AMAA's Administrative Director, Mr. Dikran Youmshakian's invocation. The ensemble performed a most moving recital with Mozart's "Piano Quartet No.1 in g minor K.478", five works of Komidas, and Rupen Altunyan's "Kochari". Following the intermission the musicians performed Gabriel Faure's "Piano Quartet No.1 in c minor Op.15" and concluded with five other Komidas selections. Each musician possessed brilliant technique, offering their own interpretation to each masterpiece. Violinist Merdinian had the versatility to pump out empowering melodies of Komidas' "Echmiadzin Dance" with such passion while handling the delicate high pitches of Komidas' "Chinar Es" with deep emotion. Violinist Galileas' bowing techniques and vibrato resonated moving melodies in Komidas' pieces, especially when he performed as 1<sup>st</sup> violinist in "Kochari". Violist Nazaryan's rich tones added depth to all compositions. Cellist Kurdiyan guided her



bow swiftly and skillfully and pianist Alaverdian's brilliant performance in the Piano Quartets was precise yet filled with emotion. The audience was moved by the musicians' rendition of the Komidas pieces—those haunting Armenian melodies, and especially by "Groong". Komidas—priest and composer, created these compositions in the early 1900's. To this day they are still considered musical masterpieces by Armenians and non-Armenians around the world.

Prior to Altunian's "Pert Bar" Encore, Mr. Merdinian thanked the AMAA for providing them the opportunity to be part of AMAA's outreach to the children of Armenia and Karabagh. He recognized the presence of pianist Lucy Ishkanian, who was instrumental in introducing the group to the AMAA, and thanked her for her guidance. Merdinian also recognized Dr. Jacob Lateiner, piano professor of The Juilliard School, for his attendance and continued support. A lovely reception followed the program where the audience had the opportunity to meet the artists. G

## AMAA PARTICIPATES IN ALEXANDRIA, VA-GUMRI SISTER CITY FESTIVAL

It has been a beautiful tradition for the City of Alexandria, VA to sponsor a day long Armenian Festival each year in May, to support their sister city, Gumri in Armenia.

The festival attracts many Armenian organizations who participate with their displays, and hundreds of tourists who come to enjoy the Armenian food, music and folk dance.

The Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) once again participated in the festival (May 15, 2004) with a display of Armenian books and more important with material promoting its relief work in Armenia. AMAA Administrative Director, Dikran Youmshakian, participated in the festival and had an opportunity to address the audience.

The Alexandria – Gumri Sister City Organizing Committee sponsors five children in Armenia through the AMAA.G





## The Armenian Missionary Association of Canada

The Armenian Missionary Association of Canada (AMAC) promotes the mission of the AMAA in Canada. Both organizations share the same Executive Director, whose first meeting with the pastors of our four churches was in Toronto, on March 12.

Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji also visited Montreal, Canada on May 16 and preached the dedication sermon of the Armenian Evangelical First Church of Montreal (the Rev. Georges Dabbo, pastor), and celebrated AMAA/AMAC Sunday in the Armenian Evangelical Church of Montreal (the Rev. Mher Khatchikian, pastor).

A new Board with officers and an Executive Committee was elected on May 22, with the Rev. Mher Khatchikian as President.

We congratulate them, and welcome them to the work of our mission in the World. G



(l to r) Rev. Yessayi Sarmazian, Rev. Dr. Peter Doghramji, Rev. Georges Dabbo, Rev. Hovhannes Sarmazian and Rev. Mher Khatchikian.

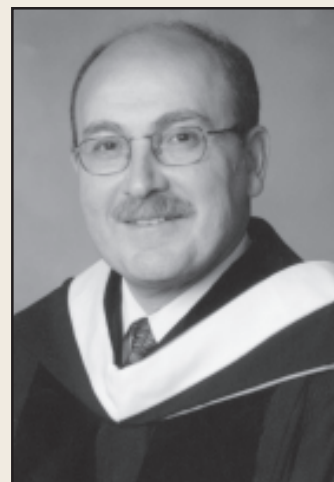
Armenian Evangelical First Church of Montreal (above). Clergy participating in the Dedication Service of the newly acquired building of the Armenian Evangelical First Church of Montreal.

### CONGRATULATIONS

As he begins his 21<sup>st</sup> year of service at the AMAA, we congratulate Mr. Dikran Youmshakian, our Administrative Director, for two other landmarks: graduation from the New Brunswick Theological Seminary, on Saturday, May 22, 2004, with a Master of Arts Degree in Theological Studies, and a Ministerial License from the AEUNA. This was really a major achievement, as the studies were carried along with Dikran's full time service at the Armenian Missionary Association of America. In only three years, Dikran was able to complete his studies concentrating on the New Testament. His final thesis was on the Epistle to the Hebrews. When asked how did he do it, Dikran's answer was: "That is part of my life. I had two previous degrees – B.S. in Mathematics and A.A. Degree in Business Computer Programming, both achieved with full time employment. It means waking up at 4:00 a.m. and returning home at about midnight".

Badveli Dikran is married to Sossi and they have two children, Avo and Teny, who all deserve credit for being understanding and supportive.

Congratulations!



## Deeply Spiritual and Talented Soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian Appears at Haigazian Benefit

When our Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary invited soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian to be our honored guest at a benefit luncheon in Pasadena on May 20, 2004 we knew she was talented. We were not aware, however, of her passionate devotion to her Creator. Displaying unique maturity and spirituality during a question and answer session, the young Canadian Armenian commented, "The least I can do is to give back to Him who kissed my throat when I was born." "We can all do that with our talents," she added.

In speaking about her personal background in music, Bayrakdarian, who has sung on stages worldwide, said that "it began in the Armenian Church" where her mother was choir director. The youngest of six children, Isabel was encouraged along with her brothers and sisters to participate in the liturgy, either musically or on the altar. "Music refines the soul and it has brought out good qualities in me. Music makes you think about humanity," she reflected.

The diva was introduced by USC Music Professor Lucina Agbabian Hubbard, a Haigazian Auxiliary past president, who read excerpts of Bayrakdarian press reviews from around the world. She played several selections from Isabel's CBC album "Joyous Light," a collection of Armenian liturgical music, and from her Spanish and Latin award winning CD "Azualao."

The lovely home of Dr. and Mrs. John Kassabian set the background for the appearance of the opera sensation who captivated her Pasadena audience. She is quite independent, and refused to be chauffeured to the event. She personally drove a rented car in Los Angeles traffic to the venue. She has received outstanding reviews for her appearance in *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion in Los Angeles, ending mid-June.

A native of Zahle, Lebanon, Bayrakdarian emigrated with her family to Canada when she was 15 and, after receiving a degree in biomedical engineering, attended the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto. She commented on being Armenian. "It's easy to re-



*Haigazian University Women's Auxiliary of Los Angeles, CA.*

main Armenian when you are in your homeland. It's difficult to remain Armenian when you are in the diaspora." She stressed how important it is to teach children about their heritage and language.

Bayrakdarian recently returned from her first trip to Armenia with a crew from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation to film a documentary. She immediately fell in love with the country of her ancestors. She was thrilled to sing at the 13<sup>th</sup> century Geghart Monastery carved into the side of a mountain. "I totally broke down when I went to Geghart. I'm so happy I lived to see it."

Rev. Dr. John Khanjian, immediate past president of Haigazian University, graciously offered the blessing and Auxiliary President Joyce Stein MC'd the luncheon program. Mrs. Stein thanked Isabel and recognized the audience for supporting the University which is preparing to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2005. She gave an optimistic report on the University in Beirut which presently has the highest enrollment in its history. Thanks to generous donors, no qualified Armenian student has ever been turned away from Haigazian because of lack of funds.

A scholarship will be presented this year in loving memory of Mrs. Evelyn Levonian



*Lucina Agbabian Hubbard with soprano Isabel Bayrakdarian.*

who spent many years as a dedicated and active member and was a past president of the Auxiliary. She suffered a major stroke eleven years ago and was in declining health until her passing on May 5, 2004. G



# The Near East

## An Interview With Dr. Doghramji About His Recent Visit

Q. Where is the Near East?

A. It depends. When I was a student, I was taught that the Near East included Syria, Lebanon, Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Palestine, Egypt and Iran. During our recent conversations with the Near East Union, I learned that they have enlarged it to include Cyprus, Greece, Bulgaria, and even Australia. The Near East is getting "nearer" than ever before.

Q. Does the AMAA have any missionaries there?

A. Yes, indeed. I met many of them in Beirut. Gone are the old school missionaries of the American Board. The AMAA took over after they left, and our local Armenian Evangelical pastors, educators, evangelists, and administrators became the missionaries.

Q. Missionaries come very strong on education. Is that true of our mission policy in Lebanon and Syria?

A. As a matter of fact it is. Our policy is best described as a comprehensive or holistic program of **educational evangelism**, covering all levels, from Kindergarten to University.

Q. Could you be more specific, and give some examples.

A. I am glad you asked. Our Armenian Christian heritage is a priceless treasure which cannot be preserved or enhanced through public schools. We must have Armenian Christian institutions to teach our language and culture, and through that medium to evangelize young minds with the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We do this through our day schools (elementary, high school, and boarding school), Sunday schools, youth activities, camps, DVBS, social services, college (Haigazian University) and seminary (graduate level).

Q. Who are the beneficiaries of this program?

A. Our doors are open to all without any distinction or discrimination, be they Catholic, Apostolic, Baptist, Brotherhood, or even non-Armenian. The Syriac Evangelical Church has been part of our Union since the beginning of the Reform Movement. They have a thriving school in Aleppo. The Emmanuel elementary school housed on the grounds of Aleppo College serves our Arab and Muslim neighbors. They do not need our financial assistance. In fact, the school generates income for others. Haigazian University serves Armenians, Arabs and all nationalities. It represents our Armenian mission and outreach to all God's children. Most of the beneficiaries, however, are ultimately our churches.

Q. Is there one particular area which our readers may be challenged to join in this mission endeavor?

A. We may encapsulate that in the form of a motto, which Mr. Bush used during his campaign for the presidency: "No child should be left behind." The annual sponsorship of a child is \$200. There are urgent requests to raise it to \$250. With that amount, we enable children not to drop out of school, but to continue their schooling to become a productive citizens and a disciples of Jesus Christ.



*The Board of Directors of Haigazian University.*

Q. How many scholarships do you need?

A. We have about 950 children now. We urgently need at least 250 more to be able to keep our current enrollment. Many more are needed to reach out to children who go to menial work or an apprenticeship. They are left behind and neglected.

Q. Have you received any offers for help?

A. I am happy to say that the United Armenian Congregational Church in Hollywood responded to Mr. Youmsahkian's appeal by pledging 50 sponsorships during a service of worship in March. Recently Chicago and Havertown increased theirs by 5 each. We need 190 more to reach our quota for this year just to break even.

Q. Is there a last word you want to say?

A. Yes. In Christ's name, HELP! Let the children come to him, and let no one be left behind! Thank you for your help.

## AMAA PRESIDENT MEETS WITH HIS HOLINESS CATHOLICOS ARAM I



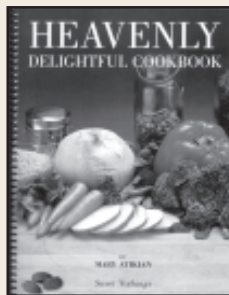
During his recent trip to Lebanon (April 27 - May 3) Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) President Andy Torigian met with His Holiness Catholicos Aram I in Antelias, Lebanon, along with Reverend Megerdich Karagoezian, President of the Union of the Armenian Evangelical Churches in the Near East. The evangelicals and the apostolics have some joint projects which they support, such as the Centers for Armenian Handicapped in Lebanon and the Armenian National Sanatorium of Lebanon for TB patients in Azounieh, Lebanon. G

### AVAILABLE FROM THE AMAA BOOK SERVICE PROGRAM

#### Heavenly Delightful Cookbook

by Mary Ekmekji Atikian (size 8.5 by 11). What makes this book unique is that Mrs. Atikian selected biblical verses, gave them her own explanations and tied them to the recipes. Her motivation to write such a book was not only to make the preparers of food aware of some delicious and sometime exotic dishes, but also to encourage them to read the biblical verses. Some recipes are easy and quick, others need to be explored. They are all healthy and nutritious meals. The recipes in this cookbook are not necessarily "Original", but they are her own variations of mostly Armenian and Middle Eastern cuisine.

Each copy costs \$25.00 plus shipping and handling. To order copies (catalogue #306) please fill out the form on page 15.



May 11, 2004

Rev. Peter B. Doghramji, Ph. D.,  
AMAA Executive Director

Dear Dr. Doghramji:

We would like to thank you for taking the time to personally and directly acquaint yourself with the various ministries of our Union, in particular with the time you spent at the Social Action Center in Trad. Your listening ear, encouragement and insights created a bridge for us, helping us to know that "in the Lord our labor is not in vain".

As we mentioned during that meeting, alongside the committee's striving to assist needy congregation members of all the Union's churches, we have a particularly heavy burden: the case of a twenty year old named George Kelejian. He is a member of the Armenian Evangelical Church of Nor Marash, and has been in Jeitawi (Ashrafieh) Hospital since December 2003. Until recently, he was undergoing treatment for aplastic anemia with the hope of having a bone marrow transplant before too long. However, the treatment process is uncertain now because no exact match was found for the transplant as yet.

To this day, the hospital expenses have added up to approximately USD \$20,000 (twenty thousand US Dollars), around half of which was provided to him either as a grant or as a loan. We should also mention the huge amount of emotional and psychological stress pressuring the family members.

The committee has asked our local churches to provide some assistance for this very difficult and sad case. We would like to ask you to consider joining us to support this family in the hospital expenses. We also ask you to lift the Kelejian family to God in prayers of intercession, asking Him to pour His healing, hope, and peace into their lives.

May God grant you wisdom and endurance in your new position, as you honor the Lord Jesus with the "sweat of your brow".

You may contact me, or Miss Rita Lao at the Social Center, for any questions.

Rev. L. Nishan Bakalian, Chairman  
Social Action Committee



# QRI STONHAKAN MI OUI UN

## Wafan |1 Jouj i ki an

**K**ornj osi : k; [; zi in mh= why; r ; u bavanoumn; r ka\i n! P7[os A5aq; al4 Kornj azuoz gra6 i r a5a=i n namaki n mh= karg me fimnakan j ; ladrouj i unn; r k'enh fam; ra, . ouj ; an ; u mi ouj ; an masi n4 oronq a\vmhakan ; n na; u m; r 7r; roun!

Qri stonhakan mi ouj i une bazar]ak anfrav; , touj i un h ; k; [; zuo\ k; anqin mh=! Ba\z4 i 2nc ; n \atkani, n; re mi ouj ; an!

Est A5aq; ali n4 mi ouj i une *no\nouj i un* ch! An \stak7rhk ke fastath4 j h 9, norfn; re xanaxan ; n\l spasar-kouj i unn; re xanaxan ; n\l n; rgor6ouj i unn; re xanaxan ; n0 (Al Kornj 1 ÉÉi l-T)! Our; mn4 P7[os ke \i ; ; znh Kornj osi qriston; an; roun4 j h i r; nq famanman c; n! I uraqanci ure ouni i r i ura\atouk , norfq; rn ou ta[andn; re4 oronq i spas drou; lou ; n Qri stosi datin famar! An ke ba[dath xanonq mardka\i n marmi ni n f; t! Marmi ne mi auor (unit) men h4 balz ouni i r xanaxan andamn; re3 i r; nz i ura\atouk pa, t7nn; row ; u partakanouj i unn; row!

No\nn h paragan : k; [; zi in nkatmamb! Fon amhn t; sak mardik kan3 i r; nz \atouk ta[andn; row4 endounakouj i unn; row ; u anfatakanouj i unn; row! Anfrav; , t ch ; u oc al ba[ ] ali4 or bolorn al mi at; sak mta6; n4 mi at; sak ellan4 mi at; sak gor6; n3 Qri stosi 6a5a\; lou famar! Qri stonhakan mi ouj i une ci n, anakhr mi at; sakouj i un kam nman7rinakouj i un!

Qristonhakan mi ouj i un ke n, anakh fasarakaz \an]na5ouj i un (commitment) oun; nal ; k; [; zi in thr ; u glou. ; [o[ ] isous Qristosi! Asika# hr gl. auor \atkani, e3 a5aq; aln; re i rarou f; t mi azno[1 anong . oraphs noui roua6 hin Qristosi ; u Anor srbaxan datin! Asika# h or P7[os A5aq; al ou, adrouj ; an ke \an]nh Kornj osi qriston; an; roun4 oronq ke wi yhi n i r; nz fog; uor , a5aui [in ; u va5angouj ; an wra\! Anonzmh omanq ke pndhi n4 j h i r; nq 9P7[os; an ; n04 ouri, n; r3 9Ap7[os; an ; n0 (Al Kornl Éi l)! A5aq; ale ke , ; , th a\i i ro[ouj i une4 j h P7[os ; u Ap7[os 9lok spasarkoun; r ; n0l j h Kornj osi : k; [; zi n *Qristosi* : k; [; zi n h! : k; [; zi n mardozmh ke ba[kana\4 balz *astoua6ali n* fastatouj i un men h! 9P7[os0n; re ke tnk; n4 9Ap7[os0n; re kr =r; n4 balz Astoua6 h4 or xa\i n k'ay; znh (Éi l)4 90# mhke ouri , fim krna\ dn; l3 droua6hn xat4 or ] isous Qri ston h0 (Éi ÉÉ)!

F; t; uabar4 Qri stonhakan mi ouj ; an mh= anfrav; , t fra-ma\akane a\i n h4 or qriston; an; r oun; nan Qri stosi fandhp katar; al fauatarmouj i un ; u katar; al \an]na-5ouj i un! : rb asika ouni n3 krnan i rarou f; t fam; ra, . april ; u gor6; l4 i f; youks i r; nz tarb; rouj i unn; roun!

Qristonhakan mi ouj i une k'; nj adrh or Qristosi f; t; uordn; re xi rar endouni n incphs na; u \arg; n i r; nz tarb; rouj i unn; re! Mardka\i n z; [in baza\at

i ro[ouj i unn; rhn mhke a\i n h4 or ckan ; rkou anfatn; r or katar; laphs no\nanman ellan! Astoua6 amhn anfat orphs ; xaki arara6 st; [6a6 h! Our; mn4 mardozi rarmh tarb; r ellale bnakan ban men h!

Mi ouj ; an ga[tni qe mi a]; uouj ; an ; u mi 7rinakou- j ; an mh= ch4 a\i ' o. adar] faskazo[ouj ; an4 \arganqi ; u si ro\ mh= h! P7[os A5aq; al 7ri nak b; r; low mardka\i n marmine4 ke \a\tnh4 j h a5o[= ; u bnakan marmni me ba[kazouzi c andamn; roun mh= 9pa5aktoum0 cka\4 a\i famagor6akzouj i un! A5aq; ale ke grhl 9Acqe ci krnar es; l ] ; 5qin 9phtq counim q; xi 04 ; u o# al glou. e otq; roun 9phtq couni m ] ; x0 (ÉÉi ÉÉ)!

I ncphs marmni andamn; re i r; ram; rv c; n4 a\i endfa-ka5ake xi rar ambo[=azno[ 9mi abanouj i un0 me4 nma-naphs Qristosi : k; [; zuo\ andamn; re i r; nz tarb; r pa, t7nn; row ; u d; rakatarouj i unn; row8 i rarou lrazouzi c ; u xi rar ambo[=azno[ mi abanouj i un men ; n 9Qri stosi Marmi n0 ; [o[ : k; [; zi in mh=! A\ s ke n, anakh4 or anong xi rar k'endouni n4 i rarou fandhp \arganq ouni n4 xi rar ke si r; n ; u i rarou f; t ke gor6akzi n!

Qri stonhakan mi ouj i un ke n, anakh na; u i rarmh tar- b; r ; [o[ qriston; an; r yancnan4 gnafat; n ; u , ; , t; n xi rar mi azno[ hakan ban; re! l f; youks i r; nz tarb; -rouj i unn; roun4 xi r; nq mi azno[ amhnhn m; 6 i rakanou- j i une i r; nz \arab; rouj i unn h a5 Astoua6! bolorn al anor arara6n; rn ; n4 Anor ke patkani n ; u Ankh ka. ; al ; n! P7[os A5aq; al ke fa[ordh a\ s y, martouj i une es; low 9<norfn; re xanaxan ; n3 balz no\i n fogin h4 spasarkouj i unn; re xanaxan ; n3 balz no\i n Thrn hl N; rgor6ouj i unn; re xanaxan ; n3 balz no\i n Astoua6n h or ke n; rgor6h amhn i n3 bolorin mh=0 (ÉÉi l4 l)!

P7[os A5aq; al norhn mh=b; r; low mi ; uno\i n w; raba-nouj i un-nmanouj i une (analogy) ke grhl 9Ardar; u4 i ncphs marmi ne mhk h4 balz , at andamn; r ouni4 ; u a\i n marmi ni n bolor andamn; re3 j hp; t , at3 mhk marmi n ; n0 ÉÉi ÉÉ)! A\l . 7sqow4 mardka\i n marmi ne baxmaj i u ; u baxmat; sak andamn; r ouni4 oronq i r; nz k; nsakan d; re ke katar; n no\i n marmi ni n mh=! &ri nak4 ] ; 5q; r ; u otq; r no\ne c; n4 ; u lau h or no\ne c; n4 qani or mardik phtq ouni n ; rkouqi n al ; u ; rkouqn al i rarou phtq ouni n! No\ne kar; li h es; l marmni mi us andamn; roun famar al - i rarmh tarb; r4 balz no\i n marmi ni n mh= ; u no\i n marmi ni n fasarakaz bari qi n famar!

: k; [; zakan k; anqi mh=4 i ncphs na; u mi =; k; [; zakan \arab; rouj ; anz mh= al4 ga[a' ari ; u gor6; lak; rpi tarb; rouj i unn; r mi , t pi ti ellan! Qriston; an; rhn spasoua6e mi at; sakouj i un ch4 a\i mi akamouj i un4 i r; nz xanaxanouj ; an mh= n; rda, nakouj i un ; u famagor6akzouj i un i ' a5s Astou6o\ Jagauorouj ; an ; u i , i nouj i un Qristosi : k; [; zi in! G

## Shake Gulesserian

By Dr. Hrair P. Gulesserian

Shake Gulesserian was born to Adour and Ovsanna Adrouny on August 8, 1929 in Aleppo Syria. She was the youngest of 6 children. Upon her graduation from the American High School in 1948 she worked as the secretary to the CEO of Syria Petroleum Company.



In 1953, while visiting *Kchag*, the Christian Education Summer Camp in Lebanon, she met Levon whom she married in 1954. They established their home in Beirut Lebanon. The couple were blessed with 3 children: Aline, married to Randy Richards, Dickran, married to Terese Johnson and Alec, married Anahid Ashikian. Shake and Levon were further blessed by the birth of their 3 grandchildren: Kevin Richards, and Max and Cole Gulesserian. Her grandchildren as well as her family were her true pride and joy.

In 1970 the family moved to the United States and settled in San Francisco. Shake, then a young mother, single handedly raised the family for 3 years in the absence of Levon who was terminating his business in Lebanon. Later the family moved to Saratoga. Shake continued to serve her church, The Calvary Armenian Congregational Church. She worked with devotion in the Ladies Auxiliary Group and for 4 years was the President of the group. She was known for her culinary expertise, which contributed to the success of many bazaars. She was also on the Executive Committee of AMAA Peninsula Chapter, where she faithfully served for many years and was recently honored with a plaque.

Five years ago Shake underwent surgery for cancer. The operation was successful and she continued to lead a normal life, until February of 2003 when a recurrence was diagnosed. Her strong belief and faith in God made it possible for her not to lose hope. Unfortunately on February 5, 2004 Shake lost her battle. She was ready to meet her destiny. She used to say "God has showered me with blessings and has provided me with all that I need."

I would like to end by thanking God for giving us Shake, as well as giving thanks for the life of Shake: wife, mother, sister, grandma, mother-in-law, aunt and friend to all. The extraordinary and irreplaceable Shake, whose beautiful smile will never be extinguished from our minds. G

## Hrani Gazarian

Hrani Gazarian went home to the Lord on February 28<sup>th</sup>. She led a happy fulfilled life centered on her church, family and friends.

She was born Hranoosh Darbinian on January 13, 1907 in Fresno, California. She was one of eight children, three girls and five boys, born to Sirpoohy and Hagop Darbinian.

Hrani attended the Fresno public schools and graduated from Business College.

One of her fondest memories as a young woman is singing in the choir and teaching a girls Sunday School class at the Fresno Armenian Presbyterian Church.

Hrani moved to Los Angeles in 1926 after her marriage to Levon Gazarian. Their union was blessed with three children; Doris, Maryon, and Earl.

After her marriage, Hrani became active in her husband's church, the Armenian Gethsemane Congregational Church, where over many years she sang in the choir, served as Deaconess, Sunday School teacher, Sunday School Superintendent, President of the Ladies Aid, and Chairman of the Catering Committee.

Hrani was also active outside of her church. She was President of the "Friends of Armenian," opening the family home to fund raising events in support of an Armenian children's orphanage in Beirut, Lebanon. She was also a charter member of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Daughters of Vartan, holding various offices in the local chapter.

Even though she graduated from business college, Hrani never worked for pay until she turned 75. At that time she was employed by Maryon's employer. Her duty was to help the women in the "ladies dressing room". She loved every minute of her job.

Hrani will be remembered by the Children's Orphanage in Yerevan, Armenia. Although legally blind in her later years, she was able to knit over 500 pairs of warm booties for the children's feet.

Hrani was convinced in the power of prayer as evidenced by her life, teachings, and writings.

Hrani will be sorely missed. Survivors include her daughters, Doris and Maryon, son-in-law Ben, grandchildren Susan, Louis, and Wendy, grand daughter-in-law Denise and great-grandchildren, Erik and Kate. G



## Helen Zabelle Moordigian Babikian

Helen Zabelle, 99, died quietly on Thursday, in Glendale, California. Her father Nazaret had immigrated from Arapkir to Los Angeles, CA in 1892 and Maritza had immigrated to Philadelphia, PA in 1900.



Helen was the oldest of her siblings, Kisag Nazaret, Richard Ara and Myrtle, yet she outlived them all. In 1908, her mother and grandparents, Hasig & Migrdich Gulezian, were charter members of the first Armenian Church in Los Angeles, Gethsemane Armenian Congregational Church. A talented soprano, Helen sang in the choir and joined Christian Endeavor.

In 1921, while a student at Jefferson High School, Helen, her siblings and Maritza temporarily joined Nazaret at his grape ranch. Thus, Helen was graduated from San Fernando High School in 1922. From 1924 to 1927, she attended the University of Southern California with the goal of teaching voice and piano. Her studies were interrupted in order to assist an ailing mother.

Between 1930 and 1934, Helen had a dry goods store of her own in Hollywood, where she did alterations and made white shirts, and curtains. After a theft at the store, she returned to USC for two semesters and a summer and in 1935, graduated with a BA in Letters, Arts, and Sciences, and a Special Social Work Certificate. Soon after, California's State Relief Administration hired her.

In May 1938, she resigned from her position to travel to Beirut, Lebanon for an arranged marriage to Jamil Abraham Babikian. In 1939 the couple came to USA. The marriage produced a daughter, Jeanette, but ended in divorce.

On January 1, 1942. Helen began a 27-year career as an Old Age Assistance caseworker for the Los Angeles County Bureau of Public Assistance. A second marriage ended in divorce.

Helen had been appalled by the unavailability of free medical care in Syria and Lebanon 1938-1939. This influenced her mother to create in 1947 the Nazaret and Maritza Moordigian Clinic Fund to help the AMAA build the Christian Medical Center in Beirut.

In addition to her daughter and son-in-law, William Jeanes of Brooklyn, NY, Helen is survived by her granddaughter, Sheree Jeanes of Huntington Station, NY, three nieces and four nephews. G



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(Make checks payable to AMAA - Canada: Payable in U.S. dollars - Prices subject to change)

The AMAA Board of Directors and staff wish to extend their heartfelt condolences to the families of the following deceased friends whose names were submitted to us for publication in the AMAA News.

\* Babayan, Marcel  
*Westborough, MA*  
\* Bablanian, Lillian  
*Margaretville, NY*  
\* Chalemian, Stephanie  
*Franklin Lakes, NJ*  
\* Christopher, Michelle  
*Daghistanian, Sibouh*  
*Watertown, MA*  
\* Garabedian, Aghavnie  
*Hillsborough, CA*

Gazarian, Hrani  
*San Marino, CA*  
\* Gregorian, Tania  
Hagopian, George  
*Wilmington, DE*  
\* Higginbotham, Lloyd  
*Woodland Hills, CA*  
\* Kalpakian, Leon  
*Whittier, CA*  
\* Levonian, Evelyn  
*Pasadena, CA*

\* Melikian, Victoria  
*Cranston, RI*  
\* Nagel, Marian  
*Plymouth, MI*  
\* Najarian, Simon  
*Troy, MI*  
\* Paloutzian, Grace  
*Torrance, CA*  
\* Pilibosian, John  
*Bayside, NY*  
\* Samuelian, Harry  
*Lakewood, CA*

\* Shagboian, Paul  
*Kingsburg, CA*  
\* Soukesian, Grace  
*Huntington Beach, CA*  
\* Tahakjian, Martin  
*Cranston, RI*  
\* Wallace, James  
*Vienna, VA*  
\* Willa, Edward  
*Philadelphia, PA*

\* Memorials were designated for AMAA

# Dental Hygiene for the Children of Armenia

**T**he Armenian Missionary Association of America (AMAA) operates two dental clinics in Armenia – in Yerevan and Gumri. Most of the services through these free clinics are provided to children and especially to those who are under AMAA's Child Sponsorship Program.

A major problem for these children is simple dental hygiene which lacks in Armenia as many families can not afford to buy toothbrushes and toothpaste. These items are considered luxuries for families who can hardly afford to place food on the table.

In March of 2004, AMAA received a donation of two large pallets of children's toothbrushes. The donation was made by Americares through the United Armenian Fund, which also graciously carried those brushes to Yerevan, Armenia.

This was an exciting donation. However, toothbrushes with no toothpaste could not make much sense. The AMAA immediately planned and campaigned to buy toothpaste and make it available for the children in Armenia. Appeals were made through friends in the dental care area. The response was encouraging. The efforts of three individuals should be recognized. Dr. Vickie Voskian Soulas and Dr. Michael Voskian, both of New Jersey who purchased and donated 200 cases of Crest (about 15,000 tubes) and Mr. Berge Kayaian of New York who provided 8 cases. Many other donors also contributed to this project. We thank them all.

The Dental Hygiene Program will be an ongoing care provided for children in Armenia. Those who want to contribute to this program can do so by filling out the form below and sending their tax deductible donations to: AMAA, 31 W. Century Rd. Paramus, NJ 07652.



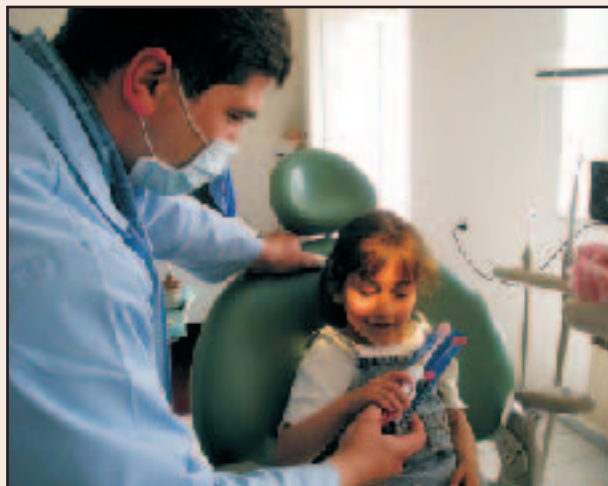
*I would like to provide Dental Hygiene for the children of Armenia.*

*Enclosed please find my donation in the amount of*  
\$ \_\_\_\_\_.

*Name* -----

*Address* -----  
-----  
-----

*(Make tax deductible checks to AMAA, earmarked for dental hygiene)*



**Armenian Missionary Association of America**

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